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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/03/2016

TAGS: PREL KCRM PGOV PINR KDEM PREF UNMIK YI

SUBJECT: KOSOVO: KOSOVO SERB PROPOSES ALL-SERB ASSEMBLY,  
PM CEKU QUIETLY PURSUING SIMILAR IDEA

REF: ZAGREB 01307

Classified By: COM TINA KAIDANOW FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Apart from his work as owner and director of TV Mir, former Kosovo Serb politician Nenad Radosavljevic has suggested several mechanisms that he says will ensure that Kosovo Serbs can effectively participate in post-status institutions. In a recent meeting with USOP, he proposed the establishment of a Kosovo-wide Serb assembly immediately after status is declared, which would then propose candidates for a "communities house" in a new bicameral Kosovo Assembly. While Radosavljevic has shopped this idea around for some time now, with little traction here or in Belgrade, it bears resemblance to an all-Kosovo Serb Congress, tentatively scheduled for December, that PM Ceku is discreetly backing via his Croatian Serb adviser, Milorad Pupovac. We encouraged Radosavljevic to meet with PM Ceku to discuss his ideas, and he agreed to do so. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Kosovo Serb owner and director of Leposavic-based TV Mir Nenad Radosavljevic recently approached USOP seeking a Democracy Commission Grant to produce a series of interactive television interviews (with audience participation) for broadcast throughout Kosovo. Although he is no longer politically active, Radosavljevic previously served as the UNMIK-appointed mayor of the northern Serb-majority municipality of Leposavic in 2001, and then as an adviser to SRSG Steiner on returns and as elected member of the Kosovo Assembly from 2001-2004. At that time, he was a member of the Return (Povratak) Coalition, the remnants of which live on today in Oliver Ivanovic's Serbian List for Kosovo and Metohija (SLKM). Like most Kosovo Serb politicians who participated in Povratak and joined the assembly in 2001, Radosavljevic told us that they were not taken seriously and were unable to effectively represent Kosovo Serbs. As a result, he said he decided to leave politics.

¶3. (SBU) Radosavljevic said that Kosovo Serbs will stay in Kosovo, and added that they just want their properties back and to live their lives as ordinary people. He predicted that nothing will change for Serbs after status, and said

that he is willing to participate in building a new multi-ethnic society, if the international community will have the courage to do what it takes to restore rule of law in Kosovo. Radosavljevic asserted that internally displaced persons (IDPs) could be brought back quickly if all of the money earmarked for returns would be spent on reconstructing homes (instead of roundtable discussions and go-and-see visits). (NOTE. Some reconstructed Serb homes in Svinjare and elsewhere continue to remain uninhabited, since the IDP owners say they are afraid to return or have found better living conditions elsewhere. UNMIK Civilian Police (CIVPOL) recently arrested a returns ministry contractor for corruption and bribery, including accepting payments for construction projects he never built and then using most of those funds to pay huge bribes back to a returns ministry official in order to get more such "contracts." END NOTE.)

¶14. (SBU) Radosavljevic also criticized Kosovo Serbs for not organizing themselves more effectively in order to ensure the conditions for their survival. He said this should start with the creation of a Kosovo-wide assembly of Serbs immediately after status is announced, which would unite all segments of the Kosovo Serb political spectrum, from moderates like the SLKM (which he claims has no popular support) to hard-liners, such as E.O.-listees Marko Jaksic and Milan Ivanovic (who he says derive their power exclusively from Belgrade). Radosavljevic proposes the assembly have 200 members, including all elected Kosovo Serb officials, all local representatives of the Belgrade-based Kosovo Coordination Center (CCK), as well as representatives from the parallel Belgrade-run university in northern Mitrovica, the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC), IDP and missing persons organizations, and civil society.

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¶15. (SBU) Based on his own previous experience in the Kosovo Assembly, Radosavljevic believes that after status Kosovo should establish a bicameral legislature with two houses. He said the first house would consist of elected assembly members based on population, while the second would contain representatives of Kosovo's minority communities. (NOTE. Unlike most Kosovo Serbs, he did not hesitate to use the word minority to refer to Serbs in Kosovo. END NOTE) Pol/Econ Chief mentioned that the status document currently being developed by Ahtisaari will contain mechanisms to ensure that Kosovo Serb voices will be heard in Kosovo institutions, if not in this precise formulation.

¶16. (C) COMMENT. Radosavljevic first presented his ideas for a Serb Assembly and a bicameral legislature to us a year ago, but it has received little traction either here or in Belgrade. His main focus is running his television station, not promoting his political proposals. However, the proposal is not unlike an all-Kosovo Serb Congress currently being discreetly organized to take place in December by Croatian MP and informal adviser to PM Ceku, Milorad Pupovac (reftel). PM Ceku recently told visiting Amb. Wisner that he backs Pupovac's plan as a way of reaching out to Kosovo Serbs, though he wanted to maintain a discreet distance in order not to taint the project. We encouraged Radosavljevic to discuss his ideas with Ceku, and Radosavljevic agreed to do so. It is encouraging to hear some alternative ideas from a prominent Kosovo Serb, and we will follow up to see that these ideas get consideration. END COMMENT.

¶17. (U) Post clears this message in its entirety for release to Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari.  
KAIDANOW